

Health Matters

What Matters to Your Health, Matters to Us

March 2019

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Message from the Dean



I recently had the privilege of holding the first state of the UTRGV School of Medicine meeting with our faculty—which is planned to become an annual event—and am pleased to report that the state of the medical school is fantastic!

A big part of our school's success is our students. The UTRGV School of Medicine has some of the most talented and compassionate students who are well on their way to becoming excellent leaders in medicine and in the communities they will serve.

In this month's issue of *Health Matters*, you can read about how our students have trained the public in hands-on CPR, organized a case study competition for high school students where they mentored students as they worked through challenging cases involving access to healthcare, and hosted their first gala to honor leaders who helped make their medical education possible.

Our students are a tremendous group! This summer, we will welcome our Class of 2023. We have matched with 55 exceptional students—52 from Texas (including 23 from the Rio Grande Valley and 13 from UTRGV) and three from out of state. Though these students have until June to accept or decline their admission into the School of Medicine, our incoming class promises to be highly talented and diverse.

With the new class, we will reach full enrollment at 210 students and will be among one of the most diverse medical schools in the country, with a student body that is 40 percent Hispanic, 18 percent Asian/Indian and 13 percent African American.

I also want to praise our faculty, who have done a wonderful job of training this next generation of physicians and biomedical scientists, and who have devoted so much time and energy serving the community and engaging in research that will transform healthcare throughout the Valley and beyond.

Yes, the UTRGV School of Medicine has much to celebrate and we will continue to transform medical education in South Texas and health care throughout the region and beyond. This is our mission, and this is our promise.

Kind Regards,

John H. Krouse, MD, PhD, MBA
Dean, UTRGV School of Medicine
Executive Vice President, Health Affairs

[About the Dean](#)

News and Events

SOM students teach hands-only CPR at Texas Two Step events across the Rio Grande Valley

By Flor Saldivar

UTRGV School of Medicine students trained more than 125 people in basic hands-only CPR Feb. 9-11 at various locations as part of the the annual National Texas Two Step campaign.

The National Texas Two Step campaign is a free, 5-minute training session designed to teach local citizens to provide aid to individuals who have entered cardiac arrest.

Twenty-one students--13 medical students and eight undergraduate students--volunteered to perform trainings at the Alamo and Brownsville flea markets, the Basilica of Our Lady San Juan Del Valle, and at the UTRGV Student Union in Edinburg.

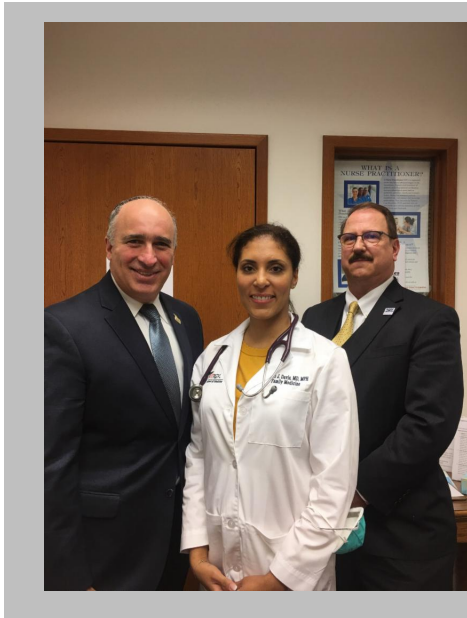
“The community was happy to see the students hosting the event,” said Gabriel Franklin, a third-year medical student.

Franklin said the medical students plan on hosting the hands-only CPR training event in the next school year.

“We hope to train more Rio Grande Valley community members in the Two Step method



to potentially help save lives,” Franklin said.



UTRGV faculty featured at RGV Day at the State Capitol

The Texas State Legislature named Claudio Kogan, MD, MBE, MEd, director of the Institute for Bioethics and Social Justice, as Chaplain of the Day, and Naomi Davis, MD, MPH, assistant dean of Undergraduate Medical Education, Clerkships, as Doctor of the Day during RGV Day at the Texas State Capitol Feb. 5.

Pictured from left to right are Dr. Kogan, Dr. Davis and Dr Andrew Dentino, vice dean for Academic Affairs at the UTRGV School of Medicine.

STDOI Assistant Professor Nicholas Blackburn presents results on sea turtle study at UTRGV symposium

By Sarah Williams-Blangero, PhD, director, South Texas Diabetes and Obesity Institute, professor and HEB Distinguished Chair in Diabetes and Genomics, Department of Human Genetics

Nicholas B. Blackburn, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Human Genetics and the South Texas Diabetes and Obesity Institute, presented a progress report on his UTRGV-funded project on fibropapillomatosis in sea turtles at the Transforming Our World Strategic Initiatives Symposium.



The prevalence of this tumor-promoting disease is growing throughout the world and is evident in the turtles of the Rio Grande Valley. Working with the community-based organization Sea Turtle Inc., Dr. Blackburn is characterizing sea turtle tumors using innovative genomic technologies.

To date, Dr. Blackburn and his colleagues from Sea Turtle Inc. have collected blood, tumor, and healthy tissue samples from a total of fourteen green sea turtles. These samples have been transcriptionally characterized in an effort to understand what is driving fibropapilloma development in the animals.

After a competition involving review of over 40 proposals, UTRGV funded a total of 10 projects that were seen to reflect key elements of the institution’s strategic plan. The Transforming Our World Strategic Initiatives Symposium, held Feb. 12 in Brownsville and Feb. 13 in Edinburg, gave the principal investigators of each of the funded projects an opportunity to summarize their progress.

SOM gala honors longtime supporters



State Sen. Juan "Chuy"
Hinojosa, District 20



State Sen. Eddie Lucio, Jr.,
District 27



Former UT System
Chancellor Francisco G.
Cigarroa, MD

The UTRGV School of Medicine medical students honored Texas State Senators Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa and Eddie Lucio, Jr. and former UT System Chancellor Francisco G. Cigarroa at the Inaugural Evening of Honors Gala Saturday, Feb. 23, at Rancho Guadalupe in Edinburg. The state senators and Dr. Cigarroa were instrumental in the creation of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and the School of Medicine.



The Medical students also presented the first Dr. Mario E. Ramirez Legacy of Leadership Award posthumously to the family of the late Dr. Ramirez, who was a family medicine physician who also served the community as the health officer and judge for Starr County. He also served on The University of Texas System Board of Regents from 1989-1995 and was elected vice-chairman in 1991.

Future awards will be given to physicians and community leaders who are committed to supporting the advancement in medicine in the Rio Grande Valley and serving the community. More of the gala can be seen in this [photo gallery](#).

[Medical Academy in Olmito wins first place at UTRGV School of Medicine ECAHP competition](#)

The UTRGV School of Medicine hosted its first Education Collaboration for Aspiring Health Professionals (ECAHP) competition Feb. 9, at its Medical Education Building Auditorium on the UTRGV Edinburg Campus.

[Read more](#)



Accolades

[Davis named fellow of AAMC LEAD Certificate Program](#)

Naomi Davis, MD, MPH, the UTRGV School of Medicine assistant dean of Undergraduate Medical Education, Clerkships, has been accepted as a fellow to the Association of American Medical College's 2019-2020 (AAMC) Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) Certificate Program.

The AAMC's LEAD Certificate Program is a one-year national leadership development program for early to mid-career faculty who aspire to be or are already in leadership positions in medical education.

The LEAD Certificate Program focuses on:

- Strategic vision and setting direction
- Developing people
- Developing organizations
- Managing effectively



Participants attend workshops, engage in learning activities, receive coaching, as well as develop and implement an individual applied leadership focus plan that they will present at an AAMC Regional Medical Education Meeting.

As assistant dean, Dr. Davis oversees the development of our third- and fourth-year curriculum for our medical students, as well as be responsible for the management of the overall clerkship experiences for medical students in their clinical rotations. She also manages the educational roles of the clerkship directors for the required and elective clinical rotations.

Dr. Davis received her MD from the Wayne State University School of Medicine and completed her residency in Family Medicine at St. Mary Mercy Hospital, both in Detroit, Michigan. She received her Master of Public Health from California State University Long Beach.

Chang awarded Barondess Fellowship from NYAM, ACGME

Chelsea Chang, MD, associate program director for the UTRGV School of Medicine Internal Medicine Residency Program with DHR Health, has been awarded the Jeremiah A. Barondess Fellowship in the Clinical Transaction from the New York Academy of Medicine, in collaboration with the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).

Dr. Chang is the first candidate to be selected in the UT system and in Texas.



In the Spotlight

Areeb Masood, Class of 2022

Areeb Masood, is a first-year medical student from Austin, Texas. He is the academic chair for the Class of 2022 and

was recently elected as the student body president.

Massod's research interests include food insecurity and the social determinants of health that contribute to food insecurity. He is currently working on a student-led research project with other first-year medical students that specifically focuses on food insecurity among pediatric patients in the Rio Grande Valley.

[Read more](#)



Summer research opportunities available for medical students and residents

The Office of the Associate Dean of Research has added tabs on its website for [medical students](#) and [residents](#) to seek out 2019 extramural research opportunities and funding.

Students and residents are encouraged to read each opportunity carefully, as they have different eligibility requirements and deadlines. For any questions regarding [Research Training Opportunities](#) and finding a mentor, contact the Office of the Associate Dean of Research at (956)296-1926 or visit the office's [webpage](#).



Great things are happening at the UTRGV School of Medicine. Learn more about the SOM Strategic Plan.

[UTRGV SOM Strategic Plan](#)

[Make a Gift](#)

Your gift to the School of Medicine supports our mission to educate a diverse group of medical students and future scientists to benefit the Rio Grande Valley and the world.

The University of Texas
Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine
Email: AskUTRGVsom@utrgv.edu
Phone: (956) 296-1900

[Contact Us](#)

